NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

FROM OUR EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT.

LONDON, OCTOBER 3, 1848.

That witty fellow *Punch* has commenced, in his weekly budget of fun, what he calls "Lectures on the British Constitution," and in his introductory observations he calls the said constitution a "*hodge-podge*," adding that, in attempting to analyze it, it is impossible to decide "how much is *hodge*, and how much is *podge*." We will not do our merry contemporary the injustice to suppose that he intends to cast any ridicule upon the subject, but we object to the propriety of his calling the constitution of England a "*hodge-podge*." Never was there a more decided misnomer. The common meaning of the word, as given by Webster, is "*a mixed mass*." We are aware that a good deal of curious learning has been displayed upon the phrase by Blackstone, in the 12th chapter and 2d book of his Commentaries: and that Coke, in his commentaries upon Littleton, in the 12th chapter of his 3d book, has talked most legally and profoundly about "*hotchpot*;" but we can find nothing in these high authorities which justifies our friend *Punch's* application of the term to the British constitution. We hold that the constitution in question is made up of a great gathering or collection of facts and doings; of charters, grants, acts of Parliament, &c.; but there is nothing of the character of a *mixture* about the mass. It is all of one material, all tending to one end; it is made up of one sole ingredient, all tending to one result, the rights and liberties of the people; and by means of which those rights and liberties have been extended, consolidated, and enjoyed. Call it, if you will, by another *semi*-classical phrase, an *omnium-gatherum*, or, in East Anglian, Provincial parlance, a "*hog-in-a-ditherum*," for it is literally a gathering together; but all that is gathered is of one homogeneous description: there is no mixture, there is no *hodge-podge* or *hotchpot* about it.

Centuries have rolled away since the work of moulding the constitution of England into the form it at present wears first began. Empires have been lost and won; kingdoms have disappeared; great ones of the earth have been laid low, and are no more remembered; but all that time, while many a haughty memorial of human pride or human grandeur has been stricken from the list of things that be, the form of government under which our liberties have been gradually widened and cemented and enjoyed in this country has been in the process of expansion, growth, and development. The NORMAN seemed for a time to oppress and overwhelm the SAXON principle of government in the State; but eventually the rugged determination of the latter restored the balance which had been for a time destroyed. A single line records the fact, but it took ages to bring our political machine to its present perfection, and to destroy, or at least to neutralize, the friction of its various parts, until each could work freely and fulfil the duty assigned to it. Our constitution is not like yours, one sole written document, to be taken up and read, and laid down and discussed. We have no written constitution. The bulwark under which we take shelter as the fortress of our liberties is composed of charters, grants, and acts of Parliament: the former wrung from monarchs by the people's power in acknowledgment of the people's rights; the latter framed by the people's representatives in protection or extension of those rights. No, no, *Mr. Punch*; our constitution is no hodge-podge; it is one great uniform mass of rights and powers, and liberties and protections; gradually got together; sometimes procured at much cost of suffering and blood, but always looking to and promoting one object. The commencement of the present year found the People and the Parliament of England at work amending and improving this constitution. A struggle had long been going on, was then, and is now going on, between the aristocratic and the popular feeling of the empire; not with any great bitterness or virulence, because in England political warfare puts on rather the appearance of an amicable suit at law than an angry encounter, and it advances towards its object perhaps with slower, but certainly with more satisfactory results. The French revolution of February burst upon us like a political earthquake among the nations, and seemed, as it rushed by us with whirlwind speed, to mock the slow but steady pace of English reforms and improvements. But, fortunately, we were not tempted to enter upon a race with our neighbors. As a people, we have never been inclined to offer incense at the altars of the wild demon of revolution. There were, indeed, some few rash or unthinking or enthusiastic men who were led away by the dazzling scenes which were enacted in the capital of France, and anxious to emulate and imitate them in this country. But the sound sense of the great bulk of all classes of society was so firmly opposed to them that they prudently abstained from all vain attempts to give reality to their wishes. The English people prefer their own experience to the experiments of others. They cherish liberty too much to run the risk of exchanging it for licentiousness. They who have been occupied so many ages in the work of perfecting and maturing the form of government under which they live will not hazard the chance of a retrograde step by taking a rash and hasty forward one, in an imperfect light, and before they are certain of its direction and tendency. The feeling that we enjoy much makes us hesitate before we make any not well-considered movement in search of more. We know that there is much to be done, that the State machine needs repairs in one place and improvement in another; that friction has crept in here, and decay is visible there; that the anti-friction of reform must cure the one, and an insertion of sound and strong materials must remedy the other. All this is known by the mass of English people, and they are desirous of remedying these defects; but not by taking the old machine to pieces, and running the risk of building it up again. This would really be making the "*hodge-podge*" of which our friend *Punch* speaks. We want renovation, not alteration; restitution, not revolution; reformation, not innovation. All this our good old "*omnium-gatherum*" of a constitution will bear; all this, we hope, it is destined gradually to receive. The firm and grave attitude of English reformers must not be mistaken for apathy; they must not be understood to be satisfied with things as they are because they do not build barricades, assassinate members of Parliament, and bully ministers, as our Teutonic friends at Frankfort have lately done. England is not going to retrograde into despotism because she does not raise the war-cry of revolution, and denounce every thing that is, without being prepared to substitute something better. She is conservative so far as is necessary to be preservative; she stands still only until she perceives that she can move advantageously: her progress is steady, not rapid; her *liberty* without *license*; and her desire that all nations and people may think and act for themselves. England has no wish to interfere with any other country's concerns, and she will not allow any other country to interfere with hers. She is prepared to do all that her constitution, liberally interpreted, will allow her to do; and if, according to *Punch's* opinion, that constitution be really a "*hodge-podge*," we sincerely wish that his merry comments upon it may enable some of our neighbors to make as good a mixture.

We did not intend to write so seriously or so long upon this subject, but we trust to your readers' indulgence for thus commenting upon an expression which has proved more suggestive than we expected.

The Edinburgh Review for October contains a very long article headed "*Revolution and Reform.*" We do not like the title; it almost leads to the inference that reform is to follow revolution; our opinion is that the former is to prevent the latter. The whole tenor of the article is, however, most strikingly in favor of our view of the question, and we do not feel a little flattered when we find opinions which we have frequently advanced in our communications to the "National Intelligencer" echoed by so high an authority. We have often stated every sentiment contained in the following extract, but, as we feel that we have never stated them so well, we venture to give the words of the eloquent reviewer, in order that our own ideas may receive the advantage of being clearly and forcibly advocated:

"No country has ever effected so many great changes by peaceful means as England has done during the last one hundred and sixty years; and far less changes, more rapidly accomplished or attempted, have, in other countries, been either attended with many of the evils of revolution, or have, in fact, produced them. It is their gradual character, and that alone, which has made them safe. The history of many of these great changes is, in this point of view, deeply instructive. The principles involved in them were, at first, slowly propagated from a few superior minds to many of inferior power, gradually made their way into large sections, and at length masses of the community. Were first maligned, then discussed, then familiarized—then embraced—till, at length, having leavened the whole lump, the Legislature solemnly set its seal to the expression of matured public opinion. Nor do we in the slightest degree doubt that equally great changes may be peacefully effected, and will be witnessed by our posterity without any danger to the constitution, provided they are effected in a similarly cautious and temperate spirit. But if by only raising our finger we could effect all these changes tomorrow, we would not do it; because certain that, until they enlisted a decided preponderance of the intelligence, wealth, and population of the country in their favor, we should only do harm by it. Many of our great changes have been half a century in maturing. It is a common place to say 'Ministers are ever behind the People.' They never do any thing of importance until 'they are compelled.' We answer at once, 'may it ever be so.' We have no wish to see the Minister who will take upon himself to propose any great change, on his own individual conviction, or on that of his official colleagues, that it will be for the benefit of the nation; nor until the nation has unequivocally expressed its decidedly preponderating will. This were, in fact, to wrest out of the hands of the people that sovereignty of which they are usually so jealous. We would strictly keep it in their hands, and would deny to any minister the right of presuming what ought to be, or what, in a few years, will be, the will of the nation. His part and his duty is to wait till he sees the great bulk of the nation already marshalling him to his course; and, so far from blaming, we would rather applaud the caution which will not be satisfied until that course is very unequivocally indicated; otherwise he might be giving effect, not to the voice of the nation, but to the suggestions of a few individuals. Thus what is often urged against the conduct of a Government—that it is behind the people—is, most generally, its highest praise. All that a wise minister will commonly attempt to do is to sail into harbor at the top of the tide. If he attempt it before, he will only bring the vessel on the breakers. The tide must be at flood before he can safely raise his anchor."

Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH never uttered a profounder or a truer word than when he said that "political institutions are not made, but grow." This vital principle it is in the British constitution, this growth which has been maturing for centuries, and is capable of indefinite further growth, which gives to it a power and an energy omnipotent for all the legitimate purposes of Government, which could not be derived from a mere skeleton of parchment. One more short extract from this powerfully written article—it will be some weeks before it is reprinted in the United States; and when it is it will not be seen by many of those who will peruse it, if inserted in your columns. This is a period in the world's history when it is of the highest importance that correct notions of good Government, and the best modes of securing it, should be widely disseminated. Republican as we are in our feelings, and regarding republicanism as the very best *theory* of Government, we are still very much in doubt whether any great portion of the family of man is fit for its *practice*, although we hold that the whole of that family has the capacity to make itself so. We do not think that our neighbors in France can establish a republican form of Government, through this moral or social or political incompatibility. You have much less of this incompatibility, and therefore you are proportionally better fitted for republican rule, and the perpetuity of your institutions depends entirely upon your preserving and increasing your adaptiveness to their operations. Now, next to your form of Government, absolutely both theoretically and practically republican, we hold the form of Government administered under the British constitution to be the most republican in its operation and results:

"It has been (says the reviewer) a very slowly-developed growth of centuries; an aggregate of laws and usages which have been imperceptibly depositing themselves during a thousand years—the most venerable and the most curious of the intellectual structures of civilized man. It is a pile, majestic indeed, but of varying orders of architecture, and of parts that have to be referred to the most widely-distant eras; much of it hoary with age, and some of it the fresh looking masonry of yesterday. But the whole erection has been marked by the law of continuity; and though, in fact, during the ten centuries of its existence, it has passed through changes which may be said to be tantamount to an entire change of constitution, and, if they had been effected simultaneously, would, in fact, have constituted such a transformation, no portion has been removed at one time so large as not to leave a far greater part standing untouched. It has been changed, like the sacred ship of Athens, plank by plank, fragment by fragment, till scarcely any part remains as it was. Still, as in the human body, continuity and change have co-operated and secured substantial identity by the *simultaneous* processes of decay and reparation, it has throughout been different, and yet the same."

The reviewer has not pleased the advocates for Parliamentary reform, because he does not think that universal suffrage and the vote by ballot are the best means of obtaining it. The *Daily News*, whilst it deprecates some of the opinions of the Edinburgh Reviewer, does not recommend universal suffrage for England; and with respect to the extension of the suffrage to females, it has the following, as it appears to us, very pertinent remarks:

"We do not think that the votes of *all* men and women would differ in their results from the votes *of all* men. The more delicate sex are almost universally dependant—the echoes of the manly mind; or, where they are not echoes, they have other and more efficient means of making their wills consulted and their ideas followed than by arraying themselves at the hustings in opposition to their husbands and their fathers."

But we are carrying out these observations upon a question of English concernment to a length which may be tedious to our transatlantic readers, although we know the deep interest which pervades the American mind respecting English politics; and the opinions of the principal English journals must be allowed to reflect the form and shape and colors which those politics assume.

The trials of the Chartists in London during the last week in September, have made both pleasant and painful revelations. The pleasant ones are the utter weakness and insignificance of the *physical*-force portion of the Chartist party, and the theoretical, visionary, vacillating, and therefore weak and unimportant character of the *moral*-force Chartists. We are convinced that, in England at least, there is no party deserving of governmental notice, who have any desire to bring about a revolution, or to oppose the constitutional administration of existing laws. England is sound at heart; there are grumblings and heart-burnings, and a desire for reform and progress, and for an extension of privilege and power to the middle and lower classes, but there is no portion of the population banded together as disturbers of the public peace, there is no organized community desirous of, or aiming to procure any, even the greatest amount of change at the cost of a revolution. The painful revelations made by these Chartist trials are the proofs of the existence of a class of people debased enough to assume the character and the duties of *spies* upon the sayings and doings of their neighbors, for the purpose of receiving the ignominious rewards of *informers*. Ashamed we are to say that these men do form a class, so far as respects numbers, importance, influence, and association. It was upon the evidence of these men that the misled and weakheaded Chartists have been convicted and sentenced to transportation for life. How far some of these misguided men were led to the commission of the offences for which they are to be banished from their native land, by the arts and cunning of the wretches who wormed themselves into their confidence for the purpose of betraying them, is a very important and painful question. How far the employment of spies is a *moral* practice we will not decide; we are sure it is not an honorable one. And further, we cannot perceive how a man who thus deceives his associates can be a competent witness against them. He cannot come into court with clean hands; he cannot be, what the lawyers call "*rectus in curia*." Be this as it may, we are quite sure that the existence and the employment of such degraded persons is a disgrace to the nation, and to the administration of our laws.

OCTOBER 5.—The trial of Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN has proceeded to the close of the examination of witnesses for the crown, and the last news brings the report down to the end of the Attorney General's case. Some curious traits of Irish character have been developed. Several of the witnesses for the prosecution could not, by any means, be induced to recognise the prisoner. "They had never seen him," "they did not know which was he," &c. Two men brought forward to give evidence positively refused to testify any thing; they said they would be shot sooner than say a word one way or the other. Of course they were committed for contempt of court, and no doubt will rather suffer all the pains and penalties of contumacy than give any testimony against the prisoner. It has leaked out that in case a verdict of guilty of high treason is given, the law will be allowed to take its course, and the full punishment inflicted. The impression that this will be the case will act favorably for the prisoner with the jury; they will be naturally and humanely disposed to give every point the most merciful interpretation, when they know that no mercy is to be rendered to the prisoner, after his case has passed out of their hands.

The grain crop of Ireland will turn out better than was expected; but the last official return of the state of the Irish potato crop, prepared for the use of the poor law commissioners, shows a very great deficiency. The statement is conclusive, and leads to the apprehension that another year of Irish misery is before us.

The death of Lord GEORGE BENTINCK has thrown the whole body of Protectionists and the two sections of Conservatives and Tories into great commotion. Toryism is rampant in England, and nothing appears to satisfy its advocates but the re-enactment of penal laws in Ireland, the re-establishment of the Holy Alliance in Europe, and of the Corn laws and all their concomitants at home. They will have to experience disappointment, however, upon these points, but they will not be the less active in their proceedings. Extremes often meet, and they have most decidedly done so when the *Standard* and the *Morning Chronicle* are found fighting under the same banner. The young *alumni* of the *Peel* school are inspired with the desire to re-unite the Tory party under their juvenile lead—they are evidently making advances to the *ultra Tories*. If they could unite and work together, they would prove a powerful, perhaps an overwhelming opposition to the Whigs; but the strength of the latter consists in the want of party cement among their opponents.

There is little or nothing new in FRANCE. There appears to have been a great oversight, as well as a show of injustice, in not placing the Bonaparte dynasty upon a par with those of Orleans and the elder branch of the Bourbons. The former should have been excluded the country as well as the two latter. The Bonapartists, however, are the most popular, not only in Paris, but throughout France; and, being the least imminently dangerous, they got into the National Assembly almost unperceived. They have remained there harmless, and many think that the admission of Louis Napoleon among them will but bring him down to their level, and that his *prestige* may evaporate at the tribune. Considerable effect was produced the other day by his entering the Assembly arm and arm with Gen. Cavaignac. Very disgraceful scenes of confusion took place on the 30th ultimo in the National Assembly in consequence of a deputy making very severe observations respecting some democratic banquets which had lately been held at Toulouse, Bourges, and other places. It is said that nothing so violent had occurred since 1793, and that the offending deputy was saved from the fury of the savage Montaguards, who rushed upon him, by the interposition of the hussiers and members of the Assembly who surrounded the tribune. These democratic banquets will prove very embarrassing to the Government. They have already caused the resignation of M. Senard, Minister of the Interior. Every day develops more clearly the changing tendency of the majority of the Assembly. Last month the majority of the Presidents and Secretaries of the Bureaus belonged to the Government party; this month only three republicans of the *vieille* are elected Presidents, namely, MM. Dupont de l'Eure, Arago, and Landrin. The remainder consist of MM. Molé, Thiers, Odilon Barrot, Dufaure, and others, all of whom make no disguise of the profound regret with which they regard the revolution of February. The debates on the constitution continue. A great struggle will take place upon the section prescribing the mode of electing the President of the republic. Strange to say, the Legitimists and Dynasties of every shade and the Moderate party are for the election by universal suffrage, whilst the most extreme Democrats, and those who were until very lately the most determined in their advocacy of universal suffrage as the panacea for all the maladies of the body politic, now seem to be in consternation at its possible results, and are straining every nerve to prevent the election of the highest functionary of the republic from being subject to such a test. In the midst, however, of all this oscillation of opinion, confidence and trade and commerce appear to be reviving in France, and the condition of the bank is improving every week.

AUSTRIA has rejected all the territorial changes which the Anglo-French mediation prescribed in Italy. The Cabinet of Vienna declares itself ready to accede to a congress of the mediating Powers who guarantied the final act of the treaty of Vienna the arrangement of the measures necessary to secure and consolidate the tranquillity of Italy. She is willing to grant to the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom the strongest guaranties for an independent national administration; on condition, however, that the said kingdom shall resume its political connexion with Austria. As regards Venice, the Austrian Government wishes to prove its sincere desire to preserve peace, and offers to suspend proceedings against the city during the negotiations with the mediating Powers, reserving its right to the possession of the city as not in any way impaired by such suspension of hostilities. The French Government have, it is said, appointed M. Vivien as envoy extraordinary to a congress to be held at Innspruck, to decide on the arrangements between Austria and Piedmont. The Emperor of Austria has shown an unusual degree of nerve in two manifestoes which he has addressed to the people and army of Hungary. He has ordered both parties in Hungary to suspend hostilities. The Croats have obtained further and most decided victories over the Magyars, and the condition of the latter has become very critical. In Frankfort the business of the Central Parliament appears to be advancing satisfactorily. The riots of September have given the central power an additional degree of strength, which may lead to the best consequences to Germany. The new Ministry of the Archduke John has become popular with the Assembly. It can now depend upon the support of the whole of the right and upon that of about seventy members of the left, which will ensure it a tolerably large majority.

The King of PRUSSIA has not gone to the extremities feared and expected. He has not dislodged the national or burgher guard from the capital, nor has he flown so completely in the face of the National Assembly as to refuse to act up to its vote, which required the military officers to profess fidelity to the constitution or resign. The late Ministry, that of Auerswald and Camphausen, refused to execute this anti-military vote of the Assembly; they feared the army. M. Beckerath, called in to replace them, refused to affront the Assembly by declaring for the independence of the army. The King, in his dilemma, applied to two general officers, Pfuel and Wrangel, to wield all power, civil and military, and nothing less than a military attack upon the capital was expected in consequence. But the King thought better of it. Gen. Pfuel has declared his determination to pursue a constitutional course. The military party in Prussia is of course indignant. They call the King's conduct an abdication, and say that he has laid his crown at the feet of the rabble. But it is not without good grounds that he has declined the advice of his brother, the Prince of Prussia, who is known to have recommended putting down the Assembly and the burgher guard by means of the military. We may hope that the crisis in Prussia, fearful as it was, has passed.

There is very little news from ITALY, but many rumors respecting Naples and Sicily. The last is that Messina has been recaptured by the Sicilians; but this may well be doubted.

HOLLAND is advancing with the formation of her new constitution very calmly and quietly.

SPAIN seems full of Carlist and Montemolin skirmishing, and to be always about something, although nothing comes to pass; but even this is better than the torpidity of Portugal.

From the north of Europe there is nothing whatever, excepting a report that five thousand Russians had crossed the Pruth to reinforce the army of occupation in Moldavia, and that winter quarters are to be prepared in that country for seventy thousand men. This will be occupation in earnest.

There is news from Sir JAMES ROSS and the expedition in search of Sir JOHN FRANKLIN and his gallant companions to the 12th July, when the ships were at Uppernavick, Davis's Straits. We are sorry to say that, up to that time, they had not the slightest intelligence or trace of the objects of their anxious inquiries. They had not seen any pieces of wreck, nor, with their most diligent researches, had they discovered the slightest clue to the fate of their adventurous countrymen.

The minor theatres in London are about commencing their winter campaign, and Sadler's Wells, the Princess, and the Adelphi had opened, and all with very satisfactory success. Mr. Bunn is about opening Drury Lane with a very strong company for English opera and the ballet. Miss Maywood, who made her *debut*, we believe, in the United States, and who has acquired much fame as a *danseuse* at some of the principal Italian theatres, has been engaged with Mr. Bunn.

The literary world affords nothing new. The magazines for the month are unusually trashy.

OCTOBER 6.—There is but little news this morning. Mr. Whiteside has commenced the defence of Mr. S. O'BRIEN. He would occupy two days.

A MADRID paper says: "Considerable sensation 'was created among the diplomatic circles at Madrid by an insult which had been offered to the 'family of the American Minister in that capital. 'The Minister had sent a note to the Government, 'demanding an immediate apology and reparation, 'declaring that otherwise he would demand his 'passports and return."

From PRUSSIA we hear that there is every probability that the negotiations with Denmark will lead to a peaceful arrangement. A letter from Strasburg states that a notorious jacobin of Baden, an ex-member to the Frankfort Parliament, is on his voyage to the United States, having been engaged by an electioneering agent of Gen. Cass's party to aid in the organization of the German emigrants in the United States in the support of that gentleman at the approaching Presidential election.

Late arrivals from Vienna state that the Austrian Government had definitively rejected the Anglo-French mediation respecting Italy. ***

FRANCE.

CORRESPONDENCE OF THE COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER.

PARIS, OCTOBER 4, 1848.

Immediately after the revolution of February, France presented an unequalled spectacle to the astonished nations of Europe. The event which had arrived so suddenly and so thoroughly to put an end to the designs of all existing parties, and to commence the reconstruction of the whole machinery of Government, and, as many voices loudly proclaimed, of the more intimate institutions of society, was received with a unanimity, not to say an enthusiasm, on all sides, which seemed full of happy omens for the future. From every quarter came adhesions to the new order of things; men of the most opposite opinions made haste to offer their allegiance, and, as if animated to a glorious and patriotic renunciation of long-cherished antagonisms, joined their hands at the altar of their country. Unity, conciliation, devotion to the common good, promised in the excitement of the hour to inaugurate a new era for France and for the world.

But a cool observer, if at that moment there were any such, could not have failed to see that this was a promise which, to say the least, could not be immediately fulfilled. The reign of Louis Philippe had been a steady preparation for a revolution, no doubt, but not for a millennium. The great extent to which it had developed the manufacturing industry of the country, by crowding into the large cities an active population whose wants increased as steadily as their earnings were diminished, and whose minds were open in consequence to the suggestions of the most radical and revolutionary doctrines, had forced the difficult and dangerous questions relating to the state of the laboring classes into a prominence which they had never had before. At the same time the undue expenditures of all the Governments of Europe, combined with other causes, had rendered a general crisis in the financial world inevitable; indeed that crisis was already in existence, and its effects had been felt for the previous year and a half. Add to all these the fact that the parties which had been in the field previous to February, though surprised by that event and ready the day after to renounce the schemes which they had long and pertinaciously maintained, were still actually in existence; that is to say, the interests on which they were founded were still in existence and could not be consigned to the grave by the words of their previous representatives; though renounced to-day they were sure to return to-morrow and resume their ascendency. In view of all these things, I say, it required no very profound judgment to foretell that the new-born harmony was not destined to a very long duration, unless the Government could accomplish impossibilities, restore prosperity to the country, revive its languishing industry, open new channels to its enterprise, give a new vitality to credit, and at the same time satisfy the demands of the workmen in the cities, and by some organization of their labor assure them constant employment and abundant returns.

And in fact the harmony was not of much longer existence than the ephemera that flutter out their little portion of vitality in the transient beams of a summer's sun. The cessation of commerce, the stoppage of industry, the doubtful policy of the Government, the unappeasable demands of the laboring classes, and the ambition of the parties that had so shortly before had full possession of the stage, all combined to produce not a state of agreement, but of entire discord. I will not dwell upon the mournful events which grew out of that discord—events which certainly did much to strengthen the hands of the absolutist interest in other countries, and to delay, though in the long run perhaps but slightly, their advancement to republican liberty. I merely refer to it here to recall to the minds of my readers the connexion between what now exists and what has gone before.

Dissensions in the Assembly.

This discord of parties is also at the bottom of the perpetual turmoil in which the deliberations of the Assembly are conducted and of which I have so often had occasion to speak. It appears in an *alerte* here, and in a newspaper article there, in a legitimate riot to-day and a republican bravado to-morrow; but, above all, it appears in the midst of the assembled representatives of the nation. The causes out of which it grew at first, some of which I have named above, are now more active than ever, and consequently the hostility is more profound and bitter. The antagonists are arrayed before each other, eager and threatening, and were it not that a milder epoch makes a return to the reign of terror impossible, it would seem as if the scenes of the Convention were about to be renewed. The passions excited are as violent as then, but, thanks to the passage of half a century, they cannot be roused to such bloody and unsparing action. The worst that can come of them now is a civil war, and that, let us hope, the genius of France may prevent.

Movements of Parties.

It is hardly yesterday since the friends of Henry V. were agitating the northern departments by their demonstrations of hope and faith in the speedy re-establishment of that representative of divine right upon the throne of his ancestors—a faith and hope, by the way, not yet extinguished. It is hardly yesterday since all Paris, all France, and all Europe were alarmed at the election of Louis Napoleon, fearing that his arrival here might be the signal for a new insurrection—a fear entirely without reason. Now it is the turn of the republicans to alarm their fellow-citizens. They have begun a series of banquets, celebrating the original proclamation of the republic. The first of these was last week at the Chalet, and was noticed in my last. It has been succeeded by similar manifestations in almost every quarter of the country. Imitating the reform banquets which distinguished the latter part of the reign of Louis Philippe, they announced their intention to maintain the agitation of the reforms, and of the new measures which they have adopted as their political programme. At some of these festivals it is alleged that, with the ascent of the wine into the brains of the young republicans who were present, the most alarming sentiments have been expressed, the red republic invoked, toasts drunk to Barbes, to Marat, and to Robespierre, and the return of the guillotine proclaimed as the only salvation of the republic. On the other hand, the party in whose interest the banquets are mainly held—the Socialist Republican party—repudiate all such extravagances, and declare that they have no other end in view than the legitimate dissemination of their principles, which are, as they affirm, the opposite of all violence, and when charged with the wish to revive the era of the guillotine, they reply that they have proved themselves opposed to the guillotine altogether; they have used all their efforts to procure the abolition of capital punishment by constitutional provision.

Scene in the Assembly.

The pitch to which the spirit of the opposing parties is wrought up was illustrated in the Assembly on Saturday, in a manner which surpassed all its previous manifestations. The occasion was a banquet at Toulouse, where, according to the report, the revolutionary excitement went all the length that it could go and be expressed merely in words. The municipal authorities, the prefect of the department, and in fact all the official characters of the place were present, with the exception of the commandant of the troops stationed there and his subordinates. The matter was brought up in the Assembly by a call upon the Minister of the Interior for explanations as to the presence of the prefect, the mayor, and the municipal council.

The representative by whom the call was made was M. Denjoy, from the Gironde, a gentleman the warmth of whose attachment to republican principles is not very generally believed in. He commenced by saying that a campaign of banquets seemed to have been opened at all points of France. The presiding thought at them was, according to appearances, not only to celebrate the fifty-sixth anniversary of the republic, but also to protest against the refusal of the right to labor and against the existing Government as the Government of martial law, of transportations *en masse*, and of the suspension of journals. At the banquet of Toulouse the parties were summoned to meet by a handbill which bore the motto, "*Vive la Republique Democratique et Sociale!*" So that there could be no doubt as to the character of the affair before it took place.

M. Denjoy's manner, as he commenced his remarks, was not of a conciliatory sort. He is at all times a speaker of the militant and aggressive order, and now he seemed bent on provoking the Mountain to the utmost. He was evidently succeeding in his intention, for each phrase was received, not with the loud interruptions which are the fashionable response when any thing unpleasing is said, but with a hoarse murmur that indicated the gathering of a storm much more formidable than those which daily burst within the walls of the chamber. To these warnings M. Denjoy paid not the slightest attention, except to give a keener and more biting edge to his words.

At this banquet, (continued the speaker,) as if words were not enough, care was taken to address the eyes. The pillars of the hall were draped with red; the pedestal of a statue of liberty was red; the cockades worn by the guests were so arranged that the white and the blue were nearly invisible, leaving them apparently red; and on the staff of a flag which was displayed at the head of the table a red cap was placed. All this showed that it was a festival of the red republic.

The first toast was given by the Prefect, and to its sentiment M. Denjoy had no objection. But a toast to the National Assembly succeeded, and it was received with cries of "Down with the National Assembly!" and one to General Cavaignac fared even worse. The cries, the hisses, and the clamor that greeted these toasts were not followed by the protest of the functionaries present, and their withdrawal from the hall. They remained silent, and silence was approval and participation. And what other conclusion could the population draw from such culpable silence than that the Government, represented by the highest authorities of the department, favored the doctrines of the banquet? In view of all this, he demanded if the Cabinet, which on another occasion had acted with such promptness, (the dissolution of the Municipal Council at Montpelier, on occasion of the Legitimist riot,) would now display the same energy and dissolve the Municipal Council of Toulouse?

Thus far, we had had nothing but preliminary murmurs, as if the Mountain had an instinctive sense of what was coming, and reserved its strength for a moment when it would all be wanted. After the banquet, (continued M. Denjoy,) there were processions in all the streets of the city, shouting *Vive Marat! Vive Robespierre! Vive la guillotine!* filling with terror the peaceable inhabitants, and spreading alarm among all classes. Was it by presenting the republic in such a manner—by reviving the recollections of '93—that they expected to make the people love the republic? Was it by presenting the republic as it had just been done at Toulouse or at the Chalet of Paris?

Effect of the Speech.

The speaker was not allowed to finish this sentence. The whole extreme Left rose like one man and sent forth a unanimous shout of "Order, order!" at which the galleries fairly shook. Messrs. Buvignier, Ollivier, and other strong-lunged orators of that party make themselves heard above the tumult like a ship's captain shouting in a storm; M. Denjoy is apostrophized by several gentlemen in terms which they would hardly repeat in their cool moments, and on one side you can see Jules Favre going out for Ledru Rollin, who is badly wanted.

At last quiet is restored, very much by the exhaustion of the combatants, and M. Denjoy, who has been looking on with great calmness, though not exactly with the air of a saint, resumes his speech. He would demand again of the Assembly if it was by evoking the recollections of 1793, if it was in proposing assignants and armed propagation of republican ideas, that they expected to attach the population to the republic. And in a word, for when they desired the end they ought also to desire the means, was it by presenting the guillotine?

The scene which followed this word baffles description, and has no parallel except in the annals of the Convention. It seemed at the instant as if the last moment of the speaker had arrived. As if by one impulse, the members who sit on the upper benches on the left rose and rushed down the steps and gathered around the tribune, screaming and threatening with clenched fists to overwhelm him, to drag him from the tribune, and to revenge the insult he had thrown at them by chastisement inflicted on his person. Another group, with equally loud and violent shouts, rushed down from the right to oppose them, but already M. Denjoy, who stood with his arms folded and with a satisfied sort of coolness, as if he had done the best thing in the world, was protected by eight of the *huissiers*, or officers in attendance, who were sufficient to guard the entrances to the tribune against a large number. There were at least four hundred representatives on the floor at that moment, gesticulating like madmen, shouting at the top of their voices; apparently a general melée was inevitable. Clement Thomas was especially prominent; he had mounted a chair directly in front of the tribune, was flourishing his arms in the direction of Denjoy, and seemed about to spring over the railing and commence the engagement. M. Senard was in the President's chair, Marrast having given it up before the affair began. He sat for a time motionless, letting the hubbub rage and roar without effort to check it. Then he tried appeals to the sense of decorum of the members; he called upon them by name, he rang his little bell, but in vain; the utmost result that he could attain was to remove Clement Thomas from his advanced position, and then in despair he put on his hat and suspended the session.

This was a check to the tumult, and, besides, the heat of the first impulse was over and gentlemen began to be a little ashamed of themselves. Still it was ten minutes before a moderate degree of quiet was restored, such a quiet as the sea shows immediately after a tempest. There was all the agitation, all the show of rage, only it was not so noisy and vehement.

Finally, one by one the members went back to their seats, the floor was cleared, the President took off his hat, and M. Denjoy commenced again. He said that he had spoken of some men at Toulouse who, heated by, he did not say what, had cried *Vive la guillotine!* This brought the left to their feet again and occasioned a long interruption, but the extreme violence of the previous outbreak was not repeated. "I was speaking of Toulouse," resumed M. Denjoy. "You voted for capital punishment," exclaimed another member. "We did not vote for it," shouted a third. "No," came from the other side, "you have no dislike to assassins." And so the disorder which had just prevailed in action was renewed in mutual objurgations.

At last, though with many interruptions, M. Denjoy declared that he had no design of insulting the members of the Left, and did not entertain the slightest supposition that they wished to revive the guillotine. He also had the tact to speak of the rush upon himself as a magnificent demonstration, of which he desired that all France might have been witnesses; for was it not the most ardent protest possible against the supposed imputation of such a wish? This mollified the Left somewhat, and he went on to speak of other banquets, and read several toasts given at them. One of these toasts, after recapitulating the reasons why the old revolution failed, concluded that the ideal of the republic and of democracy was the equal division of goods among the members of society. Another toast in honor of labor and laborers spoke of work as being rendered a chastisement and burden by erroneous doctrines, but destined to lose that odious character when the republic should have realized its divine symbol, and when, according to the words of Christ, man should have found the kingdom of God and His righteousness; by this the author of the toast meant the associated community. M. Denjoy was as much interested as any one in bringing the kingdom of God down upon earth, for he should expect to have his little share in it. But it was a dangerous thing to speak of such subjects in such a manner to men in a suffering condition, not sufficiently enlightened to give to words their just value. The insurrection of June was replete with instruction on that point. Then the people had been fed with unfounded hopes, and the Assembly knew into what kind of action those hopes had been translated. He accordingly called upon the Minister of the Interior for information whether he had taken measures to prevent the attendance of the public fuctionaries at a banquet whose character was known beforehand as well as after it had taken place.

It must not be supposed, because I have written in one paragraph the substance of this part of the speech, that it was delivered without interruption. The violence of both Right and Left was manifested at almost every word the speaker uttered; the Left were heard in denunciations, disavowals and sneers, and the Right in equally loud asseverations that it was all true, and that what M. Denjoy was saying was just the thing. Once or twice the attempt was made by individuals to crowd him off the tribune by taking a place at his side and speaking in his stead, but he maintained his place till he had got through.

After he had finished, M. Senard made a weak and halting reply, in which, as usual, he attempted to please both sides, and pleased neither. He had no official information; they must not act upon the reports of newspapers; he did not think it was so bad as it had been represented; he had appointed a commission to investigate the matter, and when their report came in, he would know what to do, &c. A discussion followed between several members, in the course of which the Government being accused of weakness, General Lamoriciere, Minister of War, came forward to defend it. He had forbidden the military officers at Toulouse from attending the banquet, and had done so with the advice of Gen. Cavaignac. As for the articles of the journals against the republic that had been cited in connexion with the debate, [several of such articles had just been referred to,] the Minister of Justice authorized him to say that their authors had been prosecuted. The Government would defend the republic with the most prompt energy, from whatever side came the attack.

To this most decided disavowal of what M. Senard had just said, that minister replied not a word. It was a rather severe thing for him, however, and every one supposed that he would resign the next day. He has not done it yet, and will not.

From this affair in the Assembly it is sufficiently evident that the hostility of parties is as strong there as in the provinces. It has now passed every limit which separates legal opposition from the resort to force; the next step will be a civil war, with the republicans proper and ultra socialists on one side and the moderate men and the members of the old parties on the other.

In speaking of this display of the Assembly it is usual to cast the blame on one side or the other exclusively, according to one's prejudices and partialities. This seems to me not altogether just. Both parties are deserving of blame, and it would be difficult, on a careful estimate of the circumstances, to say which was the most culpable. This makes the prospect for the future only the more gloomy.

The Italian Question.

On Monday the Government was once more called on to explain the state of the Italian mediation, at least so far as to say on what basis they proposed to treat. Gen. Cavaignac simply refused to answer, and the Assembly sustained him by passing to the order of the day. The utmost that was got from him and from M. Bastide was, that if the treaties of 1815 were still in actual force, there would be no occasion for the mediation at all, and that the Government still regarded itself as under the obligations previously imposed upon it by the vote of the Assembly. This amounts to nothing. France will let Italy undergo the fate of Poland, or at least that is the end of her present policy. All the rest is mere talk. The republic has fallen back upon the statesmanship of Louis Philippe, and it is not a little curious to see the very men who in the columns of the *National* used to thunder against M. Guizot, and, above all, against his obstinate silence when questioned by the Chamber, following precisely in the same track. Circumstances alter cases.

Choice of President.

The bill establishing agricultural schools and colleges was passed yesterday by a large majority, after a very sleepy discussion, marked only by the slaughter of an indefinite quantity of amendments. The rest of the week is to be devoted to the constitution, if no unfortunate "affair" comes in to prevent. The great question to be decided is, whether the President shall be chosen by the Assembly or by the people. The revolutionary party, pushing the idea of the unity of power to the utmost, wish for a President who shall be merely the instrument of the Assembly, who shall emanate from it and be liable to instant removal from office at its pleasure. The opposite opinion is entertained by the majority, and will doubtless be the one adopted. Even those who were at first in favor of the choice of the first President by the Assembly on account of the agitated state of the country, have generally renounced that idea, and the probability is that the risks of a popular election will be encountered. It will be postponed as long as possible, as every day is regarded by the Government as so much gained to the moderate party.

On Saturday last M. Pory Papy, representative from Martinique, took his seat in the Assembly. He is a dark mulatto, and his appearance excited great attention. He votes with the radicals of the Left. He is an educated man, having studied law at Paris, and has an air of intelligence.

The Finances.

The Committee on Finance have made a report on the budget of 1848. It appears that the appropriations already made for the year amount to 1,836,000,000 fr., or \$367,000,000. The Government had proposed to reduce this some 55,000,000 fr., and the committee push their economy so far as to reduce it fifty-nine millions, or about eleven and a half millions of dollars. This is accomplished, not by cutting down the expenses of the war establishment, but by diminishing the salaries of various functionaries. The diplomatic corps is shortened in its pay, almost without an exception, by the proposition of the committee. The salary of the Minister at Washington is reduced from 80,000 fr. a year to 60,000 fr., a sum on which he can no doubt live very comfortably after the republican fashion. After the economies of the committee there still remains a deficit of above three hundred millions to be provided for; but the loans already contracted will, it is estimated, fill up that hole. But after all these calculations are not certain, for they are founded on the estimated amount of the revenue, which is not only already diminished in every way, but is liable to fall off still further. The difference between the income of the customs for the eight months of 1848 and the same period in 1847 is thirty-four millions, and it is far from impossible that there may be a still larger reduction for the rest of the year. The only present certainty in public finances, and in private, too, for that matter, is uncertainty.

It is notable that in this budget the expenses of the War Department figure at four hundred and thirty-two millions, about a quarter of the whole, not including the navy. The army according to the statement is composed of 502,000 men, with 100,000 horses. Another fact worth remembering is, that when Napoleon was fighting against all Europe the expenses of his whole establishment scarcely exceeded half the economical budget of the republic.

Ministerial Changes.

There is talk of a new ministerial combination, including MM. Dufaure, Duvergier de Hauranne, and De Falloux, with M. Dufaure as Minister of the Interior. This is the precursor of a change which will perhaps take place as soon as the question on the election of the President is decided. Gen. Cavaignac will then quite probably think the time has arrived to remodel his Cabinet, and, if he does, those gentlemen will be included in the new arrangement.

The existence of the cholera in Paris is officially denied, after careful investigation. It is to be hoped that this declaration is not only true but may continue to be so.

Twelve thousand persons having been advertised for by the Government as emigrants to Algiers, seventeen thousand have presented themselves, mostly in a state of great destitution. It is hardly to be expected that men and women in such a condition, ignorant of agriculture, can successfully undertake the difficult labors of a new colony.

The weekly bulletin of the Prefect of Police was published yesterday. He reports an improvement in the state of trade and of the jewelry, bronze, and furniture manufactures. In the fortnight ending last Saturday, the receipts of the theatres amounted to 213,683f. or \$42,000. Considering that there are some eighteen establishments, this is not a very large income, as with only two exceptions they are open seven nights in the week.

AMERICUS.